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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAO](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (05/20): UNITY TALKS: "USELESS,  
ENDLESS DIALOGUE, SHAME ON YOU!"

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Main Stories:  
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All dailies lead with the swearing in of the new Palestinian Authority caretaker government on May 19 in Ramallah. According to coverage, the new government is comprised of 20 ministers from Fatah, Fida, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and independents. Azzam Al-Ahmad, head of the Fatah parliamentary block, noted that the block will boycott the new government because they were not properly consulted during the formation process. Hamas spokesperson Barhum noted in a press conference on May 19 that the new government will increase the legal and constitutional chaos in the Palestinian Territories. All papers run the names and portfolios of the new ministers.

Al-Ayyam's front page runs separate coverage of comments by Palestinian Authority Premier Fayyad reassuring that, "the newly formed government will only serve as a transitional body until Palestinian factions can agree on a national consensus government to end the current state of division." Fayyad added that, "the formation of this government is not meant to hinder Palestinian national dialogue efforts... we will support Palestinian national dialogue efforts to reach agreement because our goal is to end the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories," according to coverage.

Al-Quds' front page cites Israeli daily Haaretz in coverage of the May 18 meeting between President Obama and Israeli Premier Netanyahu in Washington. According to coverage, Obama announced his intention to propose a new peace initiative that will actively engage Arab countries, Israel and the Palestinian Authority. According to the new initiative, the U.S. will encourage Arab countries to immediately normalize relations with Israel in exchange for an Israeli halt to all settlement activities.

Al-Ayyam runs front page coverage citing wires of Secretary Clinton's May 19 Global press conference. Clinton reiterated that she has asked Israeli Premier Netanyahu to halt settlement activities in the Palestinian Territories and added that, "President Obama was very clear about this." Clinton also reiterated that the U.S. is serious about the two-state solution, noting that Palestinians deserve a state. The Secretary also stressed U.S. commitment to the security of Israel.

Al-Ayyam's front page cites Wafa in reporting on the Palestinian Authority's call on the U.S. to exert real pressure on Israel to pursue the two-state solution. Palestinian Authority presidency spokesperson Abu Rudaynah noted that, "continued, encouraging statements by the U.S., prove that President Obama is serious about resolving the conflict in the region." The spokesperson added, "Obama's statements should now be put into action."

Al-Hayat Al-Jadida front pages and Al-Ayyam runs inside coverage on a May 19 press conference held at an East Jerusalem protest tent in the neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah. Several Palestinian dignitaries denounced a recent Jerusalem Municipality decision to evict two Palestinian families from the neighborhood. The speakers at the press conference voiced their concern that the evictions could be the first step in an Israeli "scheme" to build 200 "settlement units" on the debris of demolished Palestinian homes.

In local economic news, inside pages of the dailies report on the Bank of Palestine opening a new branch on the Birzeit University campus on May 19. The opening ceremony was attended by the

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University President, Director of the Bank of Palestine and a representative of the Palestine Monetary Authority. The branch will facilitate access to banking services for university students and employees.

Al-Quds' inside page reports on a U.S. Consulate General economic delegation's visit to Hebron to meet with Hebron Mayor Al-Issili on May 19. The delegation was briefed about the economic situation in the Governorate and difficulties caused by checkpoints and other restrictions on movement, reporting notes.

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BLOCK QUOTES:  
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1) Hani Habib opines in Al-Ayyam independent daily under the title, "Obama's map" (05/20): "Obama's new map[plan] will probably take into account Israeli interests as understood by the Americans... In his plan, Obama will ask Arabs to make more concessions... normalization of relations with Israel before starting negotiations will be the most significant of these concessions, in contrast to the Arab Peace Initiative which calls for normalization after successful peace negotiations,...Obama's plan will seek to convince the Islamic world to become a partner in the process, and that, in order to become a partner, it must first normalize relations with Israel... Obama, who seemed at first to be very excited about the Arab Peace Initiative, as was his Secretary, has now ignored it completely, at least in public statements!"

2) Hatim Abu Shaban, Palestinian Legislative Council member opines in Al-Quds independent daily under the title, "Useless, endless dialogue, shame on you!" (05/20): "One question should be asked here, if the next dialogue session in July fails, what would be the destiny of the Palestinian people in Gaza? And the Palestinian cause, will we then resort to another war to destroy what is left of Gaza so that factions can finally draw the proper lesson? ... Don't you [Palestinian factions] realize that your people are fed up with this division and with your endless arguments? You should be more responsible, think about the national interest not your own interests. You should reach an agreement before it's too late."

WALLES